

MINUTES OF THE SOCIETY TO MOVE DIBCON '84 TO VANDALIA, MISSOURI (THE NORTH AMERICAN DIPLOMATIC POPULATION CENTER) © #29 ⇨ ⇨ ⇨ 50¢ in N.A./45¢ in Europe

And now, from the far corners of curved space, the farthest reaches of the near universe, comes the best 'zine east of San Francisco Bay, west of the Berkeley Hills, south of Richmond and north of Oakland (INVADERS - how did that get in there?). Yes, it's number 29 of everybody's favorite (oh, sure), LIFE OF - uh, LIFE OF - let's see, it's on the tip of my tongue - I remember - LIFE OF MONTY, brought to you by Don somebody or other - no, it's Don Del Grande (who's he?) straight from 413 Deutsch Hall, 2650 Durant Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94720 (that's on the University of California, Berkeley campus), phone (415) 643-1806.

MARK BERCH DEPARTMENT: It's coming down in buckets here in the Bay Area - we don't as much walk to class as float. It even surpassed the massive storms of last year. The water's been so high in so many places, the fourth floor here may become the third any day now.

But now....

MONTY'S NEWS AND COMMENT is brought to you by the U.S. Postal Service (possibly in association with Canada Post or whatever they call the British postal types over there) - did you know that they didn't raise the rates in 1982? (They raised the rates TWICE in '81 - a 33% increase - but who's counting that?)

What's this? THE GENERAL is later than it's been in over six years! See what happens to magazines associated with Rod Walker? (Only kidding, Rod - but you did say that all non-Diplomacy games are inept imitations, cumbersome complexities, etc.)

Meanwhile, S&T comes out again, this time being the first all-TSR issue (not really....the game was an SPI idea, but the inside is TSR). They're getting better - this time, I only needed a hacksaw instead of sandblasting or lasers to get the counters apart. By this time, BATTLE OVER BRITAIN should be released (although it may have been delayed until the summer conventions - I'm not that sure). I'm still waiting for VICTORY GAMES to make their debut.

However, the big game is....ILLUMINATI, by Steve Jackson Games. For about \$18, you can get the original game PLUS the two expansion kits for some real action. Nuclear War, look out! Speaking of which, I'm still waiting for NUCLEAR ESCALATION (the NW expansion) to come out.

Sorry to say that nobody won last issue's big mystery contest and sent me a birthday card on 2/14/83, so nobody gets a lifetime sub. Sorry to those of you whose cards got lost in the mail, but the rules clearly said that it had to be received - no hard luck stories allowed. Unlike past years, no STANTINOPLE-CON was held, mainly because of the tournaments in Sacramento and San Diego.

Speaking of contests, the INTERNATIONAL PAN-DIPLOMATIC SUPER QUIZ is slowly being worked out. Imagine winning fabulous prizes and the title of International Pan-Diplomatic Super Quiz Champion! Yes - imagine about the prizes, because I'm not handing out huge things for this. If I charge some sort of fee, maybe I can up the stakes somewhat - but this is a WINNER-TAKE-ALL event, so don't say I didn't warn you if you happen to come in second and end up with nothing.

I hate this white space - KATHN'S KORVOR manages almost 7 inches (17.78 cm) per page - I only get 6 (15.24). Speaking of pages, this is PAGE 1, or reasonable facsimile thereof.

But when I say SUPER QUIZ, I mean that - don't expect all Diplomacy questions. Far from it! You have to know (a) DIPLOMACY, (b) the hobby, past and present, (c) wargames in general, (d) academics, and (e) everything else. Here are a few sample questions that may show the kind of things I have planned:

1. How many "neutral" land areas in DIPLOMACY are not named after countries?
2. Take an army in DIPLOMACY and place it in any land area (except Switzerland) on the map. Move it as many land areas (except Switzerland) as possible without going to a space previously touched at any time (by "moving", the word refers to adjacent land areas, excluding, of course, Switzerland; e.g. Berlin to Kiel is a legal move, while Berlin to Spain isn't). Let "x" be the number of land areas touched, including the initial one. What is the maximum "x"?
3. Name the only person to publish a subzine and write for ALARUMS & EXCURSIONS in the past six months.
4. What made issue 7 of JUST AMONG FRIENDS different from issue 6?
5. What can armies do in DIPLOMACY, GLOBAL WAR, and AXIS & ALLIES that they can't in WAR AND PEACE, THE GUNS OF AUGUST, and THIRD REICH?
6. In SPI's CENTRAL FRONT game BAOR, what do the letters BAOR stand for?
7. Finish this line: the Second Law of Thermodynamics says in part that you can't make a hot stove hotter by....
8. The Virginia Plan called for a Congress which had each state receiving a number of openings proportional to their population. The New Jersey plan gave each state an equal number of openings. Which state gives the name of the compromise creating the current American bicameral system?
9. Once, in a late-1970s TV series, there was a character named Sandra Sue Abbott. Most people know her full married name better than this given name. Just what is her more popular name? (I want the character, not the person portraying her.)
10. What do (I hope this is spelled right) Emanuel Brabec and Lori Singer have in common?

THE ANSWERS....1: Two - Tunis and North Africa. (Serbia and Albania were countries - I think Albania still is.) 2: 4 (from Denmark to Livonia). 3: Cathy Cunniff. 4: Issue 6 was ~~well~~ typed; 7 was digest and printed by some sort of printer. 5: Move directly from Norway to Russia/USSR without going through any other countries. 6: British Army Of the Rhine. 7: ...putting something colder on it. 8: Connecticut. 9: Abby (Mrs. Tom) Bradford of "Eight is Enough". 10: They're cellists. (Brabec is associated with the Vienna Symphony; Singer is in the TV series "Fame").

I'll try and think up questions which don't give Americans an advantage over others, and vice versa (or if I do, I'll even things out - FAME, e.g., is very popular in England and so-so in America).

Did he say FAME?

Good night!

PAGE 2 wants to live forever -
it wants to learn how to fly
(FAME....) - oops, it's been pre-empted...

Enough of this DIP stuff....let's get right down to brass tacks with another of those great sketches by a certain nameless group whose latest cinematic effort, titled MONTY PYTHON'S THE MEANING OF LIFE, premieres in America sometime in March.

The scene: Jarrow, New Year's Eve, 1911. (Pause) Jarrow, 1912. A woman who appears to be, oh, in her 30s I'd suppose is sitting down, reading a book of some sort. Suddenly, a man bursts in. "Trouble at the mill!" he says.

"Oh, no - what's the matter?"

"One o' th' flarods gon ou' o' skew on treadle!"

"What?"

He repeats the sentence.

"What are you talking about?"

"One of the flarods has gone out of skew, apparently, on the treadle."

"What on earth does that mean?"

"Look, I don't know - Mr. Wentworth told me to come in here and say there was trouble at the mill, that's all. I didn't expect a sort of Spanish Inquisition."

The door bursts open again - there's a lot of that going around lately - and three men wearing red robes, capes, and Spanish-style hats run in. The leader, about 50cm smaller than the other two, speaks.

"Noooooooo one expects the Spanish Inquisition! Our chief weapon is surprise. Fear and surprise. Surprise and fear. Our two weapons are fear and surprise - and ruthless efficiency. Our THREE weapons are fear, surprise, ruthless efficiency, and an almost fanatical devotion to the Pope. AMONGST our weapons are such diverse elements as fear, surprise, ruthless efficiency, and an almost fanatical devotion to the Pope - and our nice red uniforms - oooooooooAH! Cardinal Fang, read the charges!"

"The charge is Heresy."

"How do you plead?" The couple is silent. "Not guilty, eh? Bring out the rack!" Cardinal Fang pulls out THE RACK - the kind you put dishes on before putting them in the dishwasher. "Tie her to the rack!"

The woman is tied, more or less, to the rack. "Confess!" (Pause)

"All right, you asked for it - Cardinal, turn - I have a feeling I shouldn't say this - turn the rack!"

The cardinals stare at him.

"OKAY, okay, I know, I tried to cover up this obvious error you made, but it's no use - PRETEND to turn the rack!"

One of the cardinals pretends to turn the rack. The main cardinal turns to the man. "NOW - you are charged with heresy on three counts: heresy by thought, heresy by word, heresy by deed, and heresy by action - FOUR counts. You have one chance to save yourself. Confess the heinous crime of heresy, reject the works of Satan - two last chances - and you will be saved - THREE, you have THREE last chances. How do you plead? Not guilty? Cardinal Biggels, fetch - THE SOFT CUSHIONS!"

Cardinal Biggels grabs two sofa cushions and hands them to The Boss. "Confess! (Poke) Confess! (Poke) Confess! (Poke Poke) He must be made of sterner stuff. Fetch - THE COMFY CHAIR!!!"

The Inquisition makes (make, for you British types) the man SIT in THE COMFY CHAIR. He appears to be enjoying it - obviously a front to hide the TREMENDOUS TORTURE he's enduring.

I can't take it any more. It's too gruesome to bear! It's a good thing I'm running out of space, too, because I've run out of sketch. What a coincidence! Oh, sure....but how do you expect me to fill the white stuff?

...in its place, PAGE 3 will be shown.

I didn't expect the Spanish Inquisition....

"Here's the tossup: remember THE CHAMBER? I wouldn't like to, either, but this is worth 10 points, so give it your best shot. Anyway, how many issues of that thing came out before it faldded?" (RRRRING)
"SCDD, Brown....no, make that CC, Brown....no, it's the SCDA Brown, definitely.....I forgot the question!"
"Since we can't decide who said that, we'll skip it...."
Could YOU have answered that question? Better still, can you tell us which Ron Brown that was?
It's time to match stabs with the champions in America's - and Canada's - favorite game with area movement, the barsity sport of the mouth,

DIP BOWL

Have you been hitting the sauce too much lately?
Anyway, let's meet the teams...."Ron Brown, from Low, Quebec....John Leeder, from Calgary, Alberta....Dave Carter, from Willowdale, Ontario.... Randolph Smyth, from Medicine Hat, Alberta....these are the varsity dippers from the current champs, the CANADIAN CLUB OF DIP.....Ron Brown, from ~~Low~~ Bakersfield, CA....Larry Peery, from San Diego, CA.... Rod Walker, from Encinitas, CA....White Jack Masters, from Valencia, CA....and these are the varsity dippers from the SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA DIPSY-DOODLERS"
Let's pick up the action early in the second half...."The next bonus is worth 30 points, and here's the tossup: other than Switzerland, there happens to be ONE neutral that's-" (BUZZZZ)
"SCDD, Walker....Serbia is the only land-locked neutral"
"Thanks for the information, but it'll cost you 3 points, and the rest of the question goes to the Canadian Club: one neutral that's not a supply center. For 10 points, what is it?" (RRRRING)
"CC, Leeder....North Africa"
"It pays to listen to the question - in this case, it pays 10 plus the bonus: for 30 points, ALL OR NOTHING, name 6 of the 9 CIVILIZATIONS in that game."
(Mumble mumble "are you sure?" grumble "Are you crazy?" fumble bumble tumble "Are you MAD?!") "Italy, Greece, Africa, and a bunch of others - how should we know?"
"Nope, that's wrong - if you want to know the answer, go out and buy the game - for \$22 you get a cheap map and 9 sets of counters which can just lie all jumbled in the box. At least SPI kicked in a tray with their games. Anyway, the next bonus is worth 25, so here goes the tossup:-"
"Wait a minute - STOP THE CLOCK! What do you mean, go out and throw away \$22 in that stuff you call money - that's 44 issues of your average 'zine - almost four years worth - and you suggest that we take our hard-earned cash and blow it on some game that you can't even play because the counters won't stay in place, not to mention the damn board!"
"I told you guys last week - complaint department is on the roof. Third seagull on the right edge. Hope that the wind doesn't blow too strongly. Anyway, here's that tossup I promised: suppose you want to run a Diplomacy tournament, and you want it placed in a major city such that the distance the players have to travel is a minimum. If the game is limited to

NOBODY expects the Spanish - what?

This is PAGE 4? Sorry about that.
You have THREE last chances to turn the page.

people in the Hobby Census-" (HERRING)

"CC, Carter....St. Louis, I suppose"

"Should've waited - 5 off, and here's the rest of the question: people in the Hobby Census limited to the continental USA. For 10 points, where should it be held?" (BUZZZZ)

"SCDD, Masters....Nashville, although you did say where SHOULD it be held, and nothing should be held in the South if at all possible, if you ask me"

"I agree - do we have to ask the bonus, or can we just give them the points? We have to ask? Ok, here's the bonus: in KINGMAKER, there are four nobles with basic strengths of at least 50 - 5 points apiece for naming them."

"Easy enough - Percy, Neville, Mowbray, and Stanley - wait, that's only four - how about Plantagenet-Lancaster?"

"If you would have said Plantagenet-YORK, you would have gotten 25 - instead, only 20 to you, which is too bad, because the score is tied with seconds remaining - here's the tossup: of ORIGINS OF WWII, KINGMAKER, DIPLOMACY, and CIVILIZATION, name the only one not designed for 7-" (BUZZZZ)

"SCDD, Peery....I'll say ORIGINS, since that happens to be right"

"Yes, that's right (TWEETLEET) and there's the whistle to end the game.... it's official! The final score is 245 for the Canadian Club of Dip to 255 for the Southern California Dipsy-Doodlers. The DIPSY-DOODLERS win!"

Just then, Dick Martin bursts in. "No one expects the Spanish Influenza, or something like that. I thought the FDR won last week?"

"Sorry, but using your guns without bullets cost your team 5 points, not to mention the penalty for being Southerners...."

Next time, the DIPSY-DOODLERS meet the WHITESTONIA INSTITUTE OF NUCLEAR HOLOCAUST in their famous grudge match. Tickets are available from this office on a first-come, first-served lottery basis. Just what is a first-come, first-served lottery? That's worth an easy 10 points....

-IF-THE-RAIN-KEEPS-UP-I-WON'T-HAVE-TO-MOVE-TO-THE-COAST-THE-COAST-WILL-MOVE-TO-ME--

**GAME
OPENINGS**

I'm still waiting to fill these games up! NO GAME FEES for these games - not even any NMR fees. Just ask Brad Wilson and Dave Manuel - I didn't get a red cent from them after they left 1981AS without warning.

DIPLOMACY - GM Dick Martin. Signed up: Michalski, Brawner, Gardner, Lucas. Three openings available.

DIPLOMACY - GM Mark Keller. Signed up: Michalski. Need six.

DIPLOMACY - GM Jim Meinel. Need seven.

It's been SEVEN MONTHS since these openings first came out! This is a worse record than when LOM was first released. Let's get with it!

MASTERMIND - Run by computer. Nobody signed up! What's wrong out there? Computers don't make mistakes (unlike John Caruso - only kidding, John). Then again, with me, who knows what can happen?

ILLUMINATI - Expansion kits 1 and 2 will be used. Any takers? (Actually, you are WARNED that I will GM this game - don't say I didn't tell you)

SOURCE OF THE NILE - I might open a game of this, if there is enough response (not like last time). Any takers?

Will Michalski drop out because of his unemployment? Even PAGE 5 doesn't know.... SOURCE, anybody?

that any weapon fired at this ship will trigger our Ultra-Carbomatic Pan-Reversal device, sending your weapon right back at you. Want to call our bluff?"

"Big deal - we have the same thing - FIRE!"

"Towel 1 away!"

The towel heads directly toward the Rebel Ship - and turns around! It begins to head for the Imperial ship - when it turns around again! The towel runs in circles between the two devices.

"Towel 2 away!" Same thing.

"All towels away!" The darkness of space is filled with the bright light of hundreds of towels colliding with each other.

"Damage report!" bellows out Obce-1.

"All equipment working," answers Princess Luscious.

You have dirty minds!

"There's a planet we can hide from the Empire down there - let's head for it!" says Calberchian.

"Heading for the planet," replies Pole-o. "Contact in 10 seconds. Why won't the Empire come after us? Five....four....three....two...."

"Easy - it's a molten rock planet."

"Won't we burn up?"

"I never thought of that-"

Did they make it? Will they survive? What about the Emperor, TS'R Alex I, the original Voice of Doom? Read about it in our NEXT ACTION-
PACKED STAR-STUDDED THRILL-LOADED EPISODE! Whenever that is. Next time will be the same old DIP WARZ.

~~88888888~~ OXFORD OUT IN FRONT..... ~~88888888~~ CAMBRIDGE ARE (1s) SINKING!
~~77777777~~

KING

MAKER, TURN NO....LOTS OF INACTIVITY

*****Seems I was wrong - you DO have to call Parliament to implement the victory conditions.

*****Stafford was killed in a battle - STANLEY is Bishop of Norwich

BEAUFORT and COURTENAY (w31)-w32-h26-h21-Warwick-Coventry

BERKELEY remains in Calais

GREY, GREYSTROKE, HERBERT and STANLEY (Barnet)-h25-Oxford-h21-Warwick-Coventry

HOLLAND, MOWBRAY, NEVILLE, STAFFORD and TALBOT remain in Barnet

LeROSE (Rye)-Rye-Rye-s24-s26-s26

LeMARGARET (Lynn)-s30-s29-s28-s27-s26

LeCHRISTOPHER (Southampton)-s20-s22-s24-s26-s26

LeGEORGE and LeTRINITY remain in Rye

LeLUCAS remains in Calais

LeSWAN remains in Caister

No combat - nobles prepare for real Kingmaking stuff soon, I suppose.

YOUR NEXT ~~GREEN~~ CARD:

NOTES:

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TURN 11 EVENT CARDS: Parliament may be summoned (discarded - correct faction did not receive it); FRENCH RAID - Warden of the Ports to Povensey with 1 ship; PEASANT REVOLT-Earl of Kent to Rochester, Constable of Dover Castle to Dover, Marshal to Black Heath.

TURN 11 orders are due by MARCH 26. No press this time.

~~MASS-PLANNING-ON-GETTING-THIS-OUT-IN-4-WEEKS-BUT-FINALS-ARE-FAST-APPROACHING----~~

Time for some page-filling gossip - I have four full pages to fill! I'd print some letters, but I haven't got any. (At least I don't print "Not For Print" letters - I don't think I do, at least.)

Kathy Byrne, in the latest WHITESTONIA, wants me to put the questions and answers in the same issue. Just for you, that's what I did this issue. Too bad there aren't any prizes....

Speaking of the Sturge herself, I just got the latest EVERYTHING (the listing of game starts and finishes as listed by Don Ditter, the current BNC). I don't believe this - there are TWO games in which Kathy didn't win OR draw!! (There is a Kathy win as Turkey and her 5-way MASS MURDERS draw, to keep things normal, but this is a shock.) To top things off, one of these losses was to an Italy!

And SPEAKING OF ITALY....there are this quarter's FUDGE FACTORS:

COUNTRY	WINS	2WD	3WD	4WD	5WD	6WD	CP	FF
AUSTRIA	2	4	1	1	2	1	5.15	1.161
ENGLAND	1	4	0	3	0	1	3.92	1.261
FRANCE	4	4	3	4	2	1	8.57	0.885
GERMANY	4	3	3	1	1	1	7.12	1.002
ITALY	4	6	2	2	2	1	8.73	0.871
RUSSIA	7	2	1	2	2	0	9.23	0.831
TURKEY	5	1	2	3	2	1	7.48	0.973

KEY: 2WD - 2-way draw (same for 3 through 6), CP - Calhamer Points (1 for a win, 1/2 for a 2-way draw, ..., 1/6 for a 6-way draw), FF - Fudge Factor (a multiplier used to "equate" wins by different countries, insofar as Diplomacy is NOT totally balanced; the higher the FF, the worse the country did - FF equals 1 plus 20% of the number of standard errors below the average CP (in this case, with 50 games, 50/7, or about 7.142)).

For comparison: in LOM #25, I took the Fudge Factors for EVERYTHING #s 49-52 combined. Italy was 1.334; Russia was 0.682. NOW, Italy has dropped to 0.871 - a jump from very poor to very good! However, FFs don't mean much unless taken over a wider spread than one EVERYTHING. Still, it shows that England better get back on the ball.

On to other things....Randolph Smyth wants to call the Leeder Poll (the ex-Leeder Poll, that is) the Runestone Poll, after John's soon-to-fold-if-not-already-done-'zine. Speaking of which.....

You know as well as PAGE 8 does that the FUDGE FACTOR is rather arbitrary - but as I always say, the best system is no system. The reductions didn't come out too well - that's why the smudges.

((The following is a leaflet I received. My comments are clearly marked; in addition, slight additions/deletions/changes have been made without affecting the content in order to clarify things))

THE 1983 RUNESTONE ZINE & GM POLL

The Sixth Annual North American Gamemaster (GM) Poll: You may rate any GM in whose postal game or games you were a player during the period beginning April 1, 1982, and whom you played under for long enough to gain an objective assessment of his or her competence as a GM ((for you LOMers, that's SOLE and SLAS - SOG had ended before the given date)). Rate each GM on a scale of 0 to 10 (0 being the lowest rating, 10 being the highest). Use whole numbers only, please - no fractions nor decimal values. Gamemasters may not rate themselves. Others may not rate GMs unless they played under those GMs on or after April 1, 1982, in regular Diplomacy games ((this is a DIPLOMACY poll, isn't it?)). Violations of these rules will result in invalidation of the entire ballot. ((Invalid ballots will be saved up and mailed to John Caruso and Roy Henricks for insertion into their fireplaces to live through next year's winters, probably))

Rate each GM by name, not by zine. Votes must have the GM's name to be counted, even if there is only one GM in a listed zine. List the GMs in alphabetical order by last name in order to facilitate tabulation.

The Seventh Annual North American Zine Poll: You may rate any publication substantially devoted to Diplomacy (including genzines, house zines of organizations, etc.) which has published at least three issues since April 1, 1982. ((Examples of 'zines that count: WHITESTONIA, DIPLOMACY DIGEST, DIPLOMACY WORLD - examples of 'zines that don't: EMPIRE, ITALIANO PRIBE, THE GENERAL, any fakes)) Rate only those zines of which you have seen enough issues to form an objective assessment of the quality of the publication, and base your rating on this assessment; do not base votes on hobby feuds, agreement or disagreement with the editor's opinions, etc. ((Why does Randolph say this? I know as well as you do that there will be many grudge votes - I wouldn't be surprised if EUROPA EXPRESS, WHITESTONIA, THE VOICE OF DOOM, HANSARD, GRAUSTARK - and, after this lambasting, LIFE OF MONTY - got more than their share of grudge votes)) As usual, give a whole-number rating for each zine from 0 to 10 (10 is highest). **IMPORTANT: SPECIFY AND LIST SUBZINES SEPARATELY!** Subzines will not be listed along with zines in the final listing. ((Last time, subzines got abnormally high ratings - Gary Coughlan refused to realize this, and was not exactly happy when Mark Berch listed zines and subzines separately in DIPLOMACY DIGEST))

Publishers may not rate their own zines; violation will result in invalidation of the entire ballot. Sign your ballot and indicate one way in which you participate in the hobby (player, GM, etc.) to establish eligibility.

All votes will be kept confidential. List zines and subzines (as well as GMs - in three separate lists, one for each category). Randolph Smyth reserves the right to invalidate any ballot not following the given guidelines.

SEND BALLOTS TO: "RUNESTONE POLL", RANDOLPH SMYTH, 212 ABERDEEN STREET S.E., MEDICINE HAT, ALTA. T1A, 0R1, CANADA. DEADLINE IS JULY 4, 1983.

THAT ADDRESS AGAIN:

RUNESTONE POLL

RANDOLPH SMYTH

212 ABERDEEN STREET SE

MEDICINE HAT, ALTA T1A 0R1

CANADA

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RESULTS OF THE POLL: Results will be tabulated as soon as possible after the deadline. To get the results, either call (403) 526-7963, or send \$1 (US cash is OK, but not US stamps) to Randolph with your ballot for the detailed written report, to be released (maybe) in July. Only North American zines and GMS may be rated.

CHANGES: The only major changes are the separation of subzines from zines ((a good move, considering last year's result)) and the availability of the results ((last year, John sold the rights of first publication to Rod Walker for DIPLOMACY WORLD - which was delayed when Rod caught the flu)).

Mark Berch has suggested in MAGUS (Steve Langley's zine) that Randolph is shying away from necessary changes in the poll format. Technically, this is true, if you agree with Randolph that the poll is due for an overhaul, but Randolph has his reasons for being conservative this year. Apart from the listed changes, there has been no overwhelming support for any specific procedural changes. Of course, quite a number of people have bitched for several years about the effect of grudge votes on the results under the current format, but Randolph has seen no proposals to solve this problem without causing others. Also, to some extent, all the grumblers are talking through their hats, since only John Leeder can even approximate the true effect of grudge votes and other suspected flaws in the current procedure. ((Without the current 0-10 system, the poll would have the voters list their top 5, 10, or whatever, zines/GMS in order - this is not right, since a GM which may be much better than the others can't get a vote much better than the others. Comparative votes have to include all GMS/zines involved, but we're back to grudge votes. There's no way out. Personally, I'd rather had grudge votes than the system used in, e.g., the Marco Poll)) The voting patterns have to be analyzed for a year before any changes can even be considered.

Randolph is not trying to put down the alternatives - every system will have advantages and disadvantages. There can be a half-dozen theories on how to re-work the poll; unfortunately, most are mutually incompatible, and while several look pretty good to Randolph, no specific one has generated overwhelming enthusiasm across the hobby. If you have a pet idea, it's not Randolph you have to convince - but he can only use one idea if the objective is one ranking list. Until a large percentage of the hobby starts pulling for a certain change, Randolph is inclined to stick with the mix of advantages and disadvantages that have been in place for six years and have been winning increasing hobby acceptance. In Randolph's view, hobby-wide acceptance and support is what it's really all about; a rather rickety system will give a far truer result if 200 voters respond (this would minimize the effect of a small number of grudge votes) than the perfect method which measures the opinions of only 20 voters.

Notice the phrase "the objective is one ranking list". The hobby is so competitive that it may be essential to the success of any poll to establish a winner every year, and even the losers like to be able to say that they finished fifth or thirty-third. ((However, I did NOT institute my "guest GMS only" policy because of my last-place finish in the Leeder Poll last year, although the events leading up to the rating - my bad GMing - had everything to do with it.)) The \$1 fee includes the complete calculations, including the application of several statistical methods to the results.

Don't use Fudge Factors! This is
PAGE 10, if you weren't too sure.
I didn't expect the Spanish Influenza.

Randolph is certainly willing - it's his duty as pollmaster - to examine the alternatives over this fall in preparation for the 1984 poll. ANY LETTERS RANDOLPH RECEIVES CONCERNING METHODS OF IMPROVING THE POLL WHICH ARE SENT WITH THE POLL VOTES WILL BE INCLUDED IN THE FINAL REPORT.

Randolph will be incommunicado from now until the poll deadline, due to his continent-covering job. Barring disaster, results should be available by August 1. Remember - anything sent to Randolph won't be read until July 4.

*****The original flyer was in first person and signed by Randolph. If you ask me, and he did, the poll is fine the way it is. You don't want grudge votes? Disregard the poll! It's that easy. If you don't like the way the poll is handled, nobody is saying "You will accept these poll results as the true and correct rating of zines, subzines, and GMS in North America, or you WILL LEAVE THE HOBBY." Quick - name some high-ranking 'zines that haven't been involved in serious controversy lately (by "lately", I mean in the previous two years or so).

As the person running the poll, Randolph should have the right to look at a ballot, say "This is a grudge vote," and remove it. That's the only way to clean up the poll. If we can't put our trust in the person running the poll, why have it in the first place? Grudge votes should be easy to catch - if somebody gets votes in the 7-10 range, clearly a 0 or a 1 is a grudge vote. (A better, but much harder, method is to make the voters put reasons why they gave votes of 4 or less. If there is a good reason for a low vote, it should be put down. Suppose somebody gives me a 4 in the GM poll and says "Don's GMing is awful." This is clearly true - it's a good thing I couldn't vote for myself, because I would have given myself a 3 - so the vote counts. Do the same thing with Gary Coughlan, and that's a grudge vote - Gary has made ONE mistake since EE first came out.

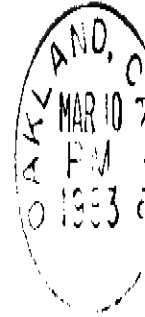
Polls always create controversy - remember when Digger Phelps and three other coaches left Nevada-Las Vegas off of the NCAA Basketball Top 15? How about SMU - the only major college football team to go undefeated, and yet they didn't win the national championship? There will always be some favoritism - remember UCLA a few years back, when they finished fourth in the Pacific 10 in basketball, only to be invited to the NCAA tournament and finish second overall? (As a side note, their second place finish was withdrawn when they received their probation - but they got to keep the money....in the NBA, the worst teams get the top players, but the NCAA tends to put the best schools and the best players together - but this is beside the point, isn't it? It's not easy filling out these things) As long as there are polls, there will be controversy. Why can't we live with it? Do we HAVE to know who's the best, even though it's going to change dramatically within the next year? (Actually, GMS tend to stay in place - 'zines are a different story.) You have your favorites - I have mine.

What's this? The end of LOM - and it's only been FOUR WEEKS since the last one! (Actually, four weeks and a day or two, most likely - but well under five weeks between issues.) Don't count on any continuation of this pattern, though - you were lucky this time.

Dave Grabar WINS? Another shock! I've had it for this issue. Next time - probably a review of Victory Games' GULF STRIKE, plus the usual stuff. Rod Walker, tell Rex Martin and Don Greenwood to get with it on THE GENERAL - let's see the Jan/Feb 1985 issue in April....

NO ONE expects - oh, it said "influenza".
Sorry about that - it's just that PAGE 11
is too close to the end.

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